
IRAQI DESTINY

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Mosul Election

Interim government underway in Northern Iraq



Pfc. James Matise

Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), congratulates Ghamin Al-Basso, newly elected interim mayor of Mosul and the Nineveh Province, while Mohammed Rashib, province chief justice, stands in the center, at the old Ba'ath Party social club May 5.

*Pfc. James Matise
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)*

For retired Iraqi general Ghamin Al-Basso, Cinco de Mayo will forever be remembered as the day he became mayor of more than 2 million citizens in Mosul and outlying Nineveh province.

The Mosul Interim Government Convention, held by local delegates and brokered by the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at the old Ba'ath Party Social Club, marked the first democratic elections, and put the first local officials in public office since the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime.

"I thank all the people who have come here from afar and made me responsible for all the province," Al-Basso said to the 24-member interim city council that elected him and the 232 delegates from nine ethnic and geographic factions who also elected the council. "I will be a loyal soldier."

It was a day of firsts at the convention, which brought together Arab, Kurdish, Turkomen, Assyrian, Yezidi and Shabakh ethnic groups from Mosul and the outlying municipalities in the province. They endured an arduous election process that took the entire day to complete, but in the end celebrated their final product.

"By being here today, you are participating in the birth of the democratic process in Iraq," said Maj. Gen. David H. Petraeus, commander 101st Abn. Div. (AASlt.) and Coalition forces in Northern Iraq, in his opening remarks. "I ask that all of you support the interim government, regardless of the individuals chosen, in order to help Mosul move forward at a critical time for its citizens."

The election convention was the culmination of hard work between Coalition forces and local delegates, who came together to hammer out an interim government in less than two weeks. Petraeus was the primary mediator who brought the

many factions together to assemble the interim government.

"I feel honored to have been a part of this process," he said. "Although there have been difficult moments, all of us who have participated have been heartened by the spirit of reconciliation."

The delegates broke off into their own groups to vote for representation to the city council. An officer of the 101st and a local judge observed each group.

Using preprinted ballots with the delegates' names printed in English and Arabic, the delegates voted and cast their ballots in wooden boxes. The boxes were escorted by armed guard into a public room and opened. A division officer and impartial election observers counted the votes, and a judge certified their tallies.

When officials had counted the ballots for the retired generals' faction, the election process took a new twist.

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RICs take Army care to the people

Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

No one has all the answers, but the soldiers supporting the Regional Information Centers throughout Mosul are looking for them.

RICs assist local civilians in whatever needs they have, said Sgt. Wayne Brantley, Tampa Bay, Florida, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). People come to the RIC with concerns about missing persons, getting fuel and needing medical help among other things.

"It's a point of distributing information as well as an area for referral," said Lt. Col. Stephen E. Bruch, commander of 2-502. "It's a single point where people can bring their questions, just like a Family Readiness Center on an Army post."

RICs track the entire infrastructure – police, fire department, schools, water treatment, electricity, radio and TV stations, medical facilities and others, Brantley said. "There are roughly 20 charts we have updated constantly that we are tracking."

There are four RIC teams located throughout the city of Mosul that makes them easy to access, but teams also travel into the community.

"We send teams out everyday assessing problems and various issues," said the commander of the Falcon RIC, Capt. Kevin L. Jackson, Chicago, Ill., 2-502. "Schools for example, we found out some needed school supplies. So we shopped around and got them. We work as a sort of community liaison between people and resources that can help



Spc. Blake Kent

Capt. Charles Kean of Austin, Texas. (right) and Capt. Jeffrey Munn, Columbia, SC (center), 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), help a local resident with an interpreter's aid, at the Regional Information Center located at the Mosul train station.

them."

The RICs recently worked to see that local government employees would receive payment for their work.

"We try to interface with all the local government agencies. We make sure people are getting paid for the services they're doing for the community," Jackson said.

According to Brantley, many of the local government employees were paid this week for the first time since the war began.

The RIC can also direct people to local hospitals that help them receive medical aid and work with the local police to inform people of laws.

Jackson said, "We make sure the hospitals have medicine and the police are patrolling the streets. With the redevelopment of the government and commu-

nity, there are new laws in place, like people not being able to carry weapons around. We help make sure the people understand the new laws."

The separate RICs meet together on a daily basis to coordinate their operations.

"We synchronize all our operations between the other RICs in the area," Jackson said.

The units running RICs throughout Mosul are the 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. Rgt., located at the Mosul train station, 2nd Bn., located at the Mosul Hotel, 3rd Bn., at the Blue Warehouse, and the 3rd Bn., 327th Infantry Regiment, located at the Ninawa TV station.

"The people of Mosul are a proud people," Jackson said. They don't want to take a lot of handouts. One of the best things we can do for them is help them get things established, keep them informed and keep the peace."

Iraqi Destiny Staff

OIC
Maj. Carl E. Purvis

NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Eric Hendrix

Editor
Sgt. Jason L. Austin

Staff
Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson
Spc. Blake Kent
Spc. Joshua M. Risner
Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

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Teachers finally getting payed their dues in Mosul

Sgt. Jason L. Austin
40th PAD

Wednesday was a holiday for local school children. It wasn't a religious or government holiday though. There simply were no teachers at the school to teach.

For the first time since the war began, local educators from the primary school system were allowed to cash their paychecks and receive payment.

Local teachers crowded against soldiers and local police to gain access to the bank. Tensions were high until

a perimeter was established and the crowd divided into two groups, male and female, according to Capt. James T. McGahey, Company B, 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

The head teachers were then allowed to enter the bank in small groups and have the school's payroll checks verified McGahey said.

Then the head teachers returned to the door and with the aid of soldiers and local police all of that school's teachers were allowed in with

"Pay" continued page 5



Sgt. Jason L. Austin

An Iraqi school teacher smiles as she watches a bank cashier count out her pay. Teachers in Mosul have not been able to cash their paychecks since the war began in early March. Soldiers and local police helped assure all the teachers received their pay.

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"There was a tie, so they're going to go re-vote," said Col. Richard O. Hatch, 101st division staff judge advocate. "It's a tie between four people, so they're going to re-vote with just those four names."

Most delegates heartily applauded the council, but some people were not happy with the results, including Suleman Al-Gerrygan, one of the 27 Kurdish delegates. He briefly walked out of deliberations with two other delegates to protest the selection of "unqualified" individuals for the city council.

Though Al-Gerrygan praised the democratic process, he nevertheless disagreed with the style of the election, he said.

After the delegates broke for lunch, several hours later than planned, the new council met to vote for their mayor and appoint a deputy mayor and assistant mayors.

They returned shortly after and the ballots were quickly tallied, but before Al-Basso's victory was announced, Petraeus notified the delegates that the council had already made its first decision resolving a miscommunication involving the Kurdish members of the council.

"It had been agreed there would be only three Kurdish council members and the deputy mayor would be one of the three. But due to a misunderstanding, the Kurds

thought there would be an added member who would be the deputy mayor," Petraeus said.

The council decided there would be no change in the number of representation, so the Kurds asked if they could exchange a member of their council for the man they wanted as deputy mayor, Petraeus said.

"It was discussed with the city council, and they decided that they would allow that member to replace one of three Kurdish members. The city council agreed unanimously and the chief judge validated that."

The deputy mayor, nominated by the Kurds and chosen by proclamation of the city council, is Khusru Goran. Two assistant mayors were also chosen from the Assyrian and Turkomen factions, also nominated by their parties and ratified by proclamations. They are Yousif Lallo and Dr. Ibrahiem Mohammed Salin.

Petraeus said one of the great things he had observed while planning the government was an intense willingness for the factions to put aside their differences and make sure they worked together to form their new government.

"There was a spirit among the delegates to get things in place," he said. "The members of the group felt there should be representation of minorities."

Fa Del Al-Merany, a member of the

Kurdistan Democratic Party invited to observe the elections, said representation could have been better but was not critical for the time being, and explained why.

"We weren't as concerned as much about representation as we were about the progress of reconstruction," he said. "We wanted to support the city, and that's the way everyone looked at it. The city council is more important than representation from this society or that society."

Al-Merany, who was involved in the election planning process, said he was primarily there to show his party's support for the interim government, which he called "a necessary step."

"It should help Mosul city with the interim city council and interim mayor, until a transitional government in Baghdad is set up," he said. "I think we all worked very well. We did have concerns, and we had some joint ideas. We are all very optimistic."

Hatch said the interim government would work hand in hand with the 101st until stability returns enough for the interim government to take over.

"Initially, all important decisions will be made by the mayor in consultation with the commanding general," he said. "That's in part to give the interim mayor the backing of the people, and also to take action if necessary. Over time we'll back out of the picture and they'll take over more responsibility."

Ball rolling with Civil Affairs repairs to Mosul neighborhood

By Spc. Blake Kent
22nd MPAD

Soldiers from the 431st Civil Affairs Battalion are helping Mosul communities by fixing water lines, removing trash and making the neighborhoods a cleaner and safer place to live.

"There are definitely some areas that need to be cleaned up," said Maj. Greg Cordray of Texarcana, Texas, 431st Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "We have a garbage truck out here, and are looking at trying to do a bit of painting as well."

The current military job allows for very little direct assistance to neighborhoods

needing cleaning and repairs.

"It's a matter of funding and assets, we're limited in what we can do," Cordray said. "We really need the relief organizations to begin coming."

Helping the people doesn't necessarily take a lot of money though, Cordray said.

"Four or five hundred dollars goes a long way here," Cordray said. "The key is, the sooner you can improve the neighborhoods and quality of life, the sooner the people will begin governing themselves. But there is just a little we can do to get the ball rolling. We hope the organizations will get the message that it is okay to come here and start work."



Spc. Blake Kent

Civil Affairs hired local men to clean up a traffic median near a residential area, bringing the community back to its prewar standards, while also helping create jobs for the people of Mosul.

"Pay" from page 4

their identification. Once inside the individual school's payroll was divided evenly among that particular school's teachers.

Three banks were opened Wednesday for this purpose according to McGahey. The central bank in Mosul released the money to the branches with escorts from the 101st Abn. Div. (AAst.)

Despite the initial tensions when the bank opened, teachers inside the bank were all smiles as the cashiers counted out their dinars.

Citizens and soldiers alike began to relax as teachers exited the building clutching their cash-filled purses.

"This type of response was planned; these people haven't been paid in two months," McGahey said. "What the soldiers are doing is important. It's important for the people and that's the reason why we're here, for the people. Anything we can do to help get their systems up and running would be good."

Arabic Expressions

English		Arabic
Sorry	=	Ah-sef
Welcome	=	Af-one
with God's will	=	In-sha-la
police/policeman	=	Shor-ti
toilet/bathroom	=	Ham-mam
work	=	Ah-mal
water	=	My
food	=	Ah-kel
money	=	Floos
I don't know?	=	Ma-aref
my eye	=	Aini

Chaplains Corner

By Chap. (Maj.) Mark E. Thompson
2nd BCT Chaplain

Somewhere in your life there is a golden treasure that you've overlooked. It sits there patiently, waiting to be discovered, waiting to bring its value into your world.

Do you know what it could be? Perhaps it is a skill that you've never taken the time to develop. Or maybe that hidden treasure is a person in your life whom you've never really taken the time to get to know. Or it could be a challenge that you have not yet had the nerve to overcome.

Perhaps it is something you've always been meaning to do, but never felt that the time was right. What a terrible shame it would be if you continued to overlook that hidden treasure and never came to know its value.

Somewhere there's a treasure you've overlooked, and once you find it, you will not want to be without it. Know that it is there, decide to open yourself up to it, and soon it will become perfectly apparent.